

type of *Trichotropis gabrieli*, Pritchard and Gatliff. By Mr. R. Hall.—Several species of the Rallidæ. By Mr. D. Le Souëf, C.M.Z.S.—Egg of Great Bower-bird, *Chlamydodera nuchalis*, from North-West Australia.

After the usual conversazione the meeting terminated.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THREE NEW AUSTRALIAN BIRDS.

By A. J. CAMPBELL.

(Read before the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria, 13th March, 1899.)

CALAMANTHUS RUBIGINOSUS (n.s.), Rusty-red Field-Wren.

Most resembles *C. campestris* (Gould), but is more rufous or rusty-red in character of colouring. The white tail tips are absent, but there are a few white feathers on the nape of the neck, which, however, may not be permanent. The whitish line over the eye is also absent.

Dimensions in inches :—Length, 4.5 ; wing, 1.95 ; tail, 1.7 ; bill, .42 ; tarsus, .9.

This variety may possibly be the Desert-Wren, *C. isabellinus* (North), which is described as having the dark streaks of the upper surface almost obsolete. In the skin under consideration these marks are fairly distinct.

Mr. Tom Carter, the collector, informs me that the bird is numerous on his station, near Point Cloates, and may be seen warbling on the tops of bushes at almost any time of the year ; but it is difficult to shoot, because as soon as one is approached it dives into the undergrowth and creeps out of sight.

PTILOTIS CARTERI (n.s.), Western White-plumed Honey-eater.

Differs from *P. penicillata* (Gould) by its smaller size and yellow-tinted plumage—almost as yellow as *P. flavescens* (Gould). However, the only skin at my command appears to be that of an immature bird ; therefore, more material is necessary before the new species can be confirmed or otherwise. In the meantime I beg to submit the name *carteri*, after the discoverer, Mr. Thomas Carter, as a small compliment for his enthusiasm as a field ornithologist, and for his British pluck in starting pastoral pursuits in such a dry and uninviting country as the region of the North-west Cape.

Comparative dimensions, in inches, of Eastern and Western varieties of White-plumed Honey-eaters :—

| | Length. | Wing. | Tail. | Bill. | Tarsus. |
|--------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| P. PENICILLATA ... | 6.75 | 3.25 | 3.0 | .43 | .85 |
| P. CARTERI ... | 6.0 | 2.8 | 2.75 | .4 | .8 |

ACANTHOGENYS FLAVACANTHUS (n.s.), Yellow-spined Honey-eater.

Differs from *A. ruficularis* (Gould) in its smaller size, lighter or more brownish tinge of the upper surface, and by yellow spines on the cheek instead of white.

Comparative dimensions, in inches, of Eastern and Western birds:—

| | Length. | Wing. | Tail. | Bill. | Tarsus. |
|---------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|---------|
| A. RUFIGULARIS ... | 10.5 | 4.75 | 4.5 | .75 | 1.0 |
| A. FLAVACANTHUS ... | 9.25 | 4.0 | 4.0 | .7 | .9 |

NOTE ON THE MAGPIE.

By D. BEST.

(Read before the Field Naturalists' Club of Victoria, 13th March, 1899.)

MANY discussions have taken place in our Club on the question as to whether the Magpie, *Gymnorhina leuconota*, Gould, is an insectivorous or vegetable feeder, but this particular question has nothing to do with the object of my short paper, or, as I prefer to call it, note.

I may, however, be allowed to express an opinion, heterodox perhaps, that the bird has always been, as it is now, omnivorous, but that, like man himself, has taken advantage of the opportunities offered by increase of settlement to indulge in luxuries it never before dreamt of, and hence its incurring the enmity of many of our farmers.

Although a lover of birds, I confess to knowing very little about them, but I am constrained to say that however much I might be desirous of increasing my very limited knowledge, I certainly could not do so to any great extent from any of the books I have looked into on Australian birds. Of course I am speaking only of Australian, or perhaps I should more correctly say Victorian authors, as I have no desire to court criticism outside my own colony.

So far as my reading goes, all I can learn is generally that a bird breeds in such a month, that it constructs a certain kind of nest, and lays so many eggs of such a size and coloration, and that it has a certain range. As to the number of eggs in a clutch and the colour, these seem two of the most important points to our ornithologists, and whilst I fully recognize that these, as also the other mentioned particulars, are of importance, I regret that so many discussions have taken place on them to the exclusion of more interesting details. Nowhere from our authors do I get any of the interesting and instructive life-history obtainable from the English periodicals on British birds. As illustrating my contention, in no Victorian publication that has come under my notice have I seen anything describing the first attempts of a bird to teach its young to fly, or to search for food, or in how many days from its birth the young bird is considered strong enough to